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ABSTRACT

College graduates' evaluations of 12 core courses in the business administration curriculum were assessed as a followup to a 1976 study. The students were bachelor's degree graduates from Roger Williams College with majors in general business administration, management, and accounting and marketing. Each course was rated on: course satisfaction, teaching effectiveness, and meaningfulness and relevance. Ratings were converted into high, moderate and low categories of priority for change according to criteria established by the investigator, and results served as a basis for recommendations. The value placed upon each course by respondents was interpreted to be indicative of the need for change. By computing an average for the respondents in each major, it could be reported whether respondents indicated a need for change in one or more of the core courses for each major. Respondents also indicated their grade point average at graduation, present work, attitudes toward their job, salaries, attempts and success in passing of professional examinations such as to become a Certified Public Accountant, broker, or Certified Management Accountant. A random sample of 101 graduates during 1980 and 1981 completed a questionnaire, which is appended, along with student comments from the questionnaire. (SW)

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A STUDY OF BUSINESS DIVISION CORE CURRICULUM STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES AS PERCEIVED BY GRADUATES OF THE CLASSES OF 1980 AND 1981 AT ROGER WILLIAMS COLLEGE

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A STUDY OF BUSINESS DIVISION CORE CURRICULUM STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES AS PERCEIVED BY GRADUATES OF THE CLASSES OF 1980 AND 1981 AT ROGER WILLIAMS COLLEGE

by

Kenneth W. Cedergren, Ed.D.

This was a follow-up study to determine how bachelor's degree graduates from two classes at Roger Williams College with majors in general business administration, management, accounting and marketing evaluated twelve core courses in the business curriculum. Each course was rated on (a) course satisfaction, (b) teaching effectiveness, and (c) meaningfulness and relevance. Ratings were converted into high, moderate and low categories of priority for change according to criteria established by the investigator, and results served as a basis for recommendations.

From a statistical random sample of College graduates during 1980 and 1981, inclusive, a 58 per cent response was received to an opinionnaire which had been prepared for the purpose and mailed to each of the 116 graduates in the sample. The sample approximated one-third of all graduates during these two years majoring in some field of business administration. Information on pertinent characteristics of the respondents was obtained, and data on graduates' ratings of courses were

analyzed according to some of the characteristics. Those were academic major, age, year graduated, and college grade point average.

The hypotheses tested were that:

1. There were no statistically significant differences in Course Satisfaction for each course as perceived by graduates when compared by major and by the comparison of data from the graduates of the years 1980 and 1981.

2. There were no statistically significant differences in Teaching Effectiveness for each course as perceived by graduates when compared by major and by the comparison of data from the graduates of the years 1980 and 1981.

3. There were no statistically significant differences in the Meaningfulness and Relevance of each core course as perceived by graduates when compared by major and by the comparison of data from the graduates of the years 1980 and 1981.

Conclusions of the study were as follows:

1. The first hypothesis was rejected, because there was found to be a statistically significant in rating Course Satisfaction for Investments (Low Priority for change) and Statistics (Moderate Priority for change).

2. The second hypothesis was also rejected as the mean weighted averages indicated that five of the twelve courses (Principles of Management, Business Mathematics, Government and Business, Data Processing, and Statistics) merited a Moderate Priority for change.

3. The third hypothesis was also rejected as as only two core courses (Investments and Principles of Management) were rated as having less than a Moderate Priority for change.

Based upon the data generated by the study, any recommendations to be offered must be considered in light of those who might use this study and those who would use the study, bearing in mind that a number of people and committees, as well as budget and time considerations would have to be weighed.

The reader is again reminded that these statistics reflect only the perception of graduates regarding core courses in business. There must certainly be other elements considered in making any changes in the core curriculum in business.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background of the Study

The plight of the college graduate in locating a job and the current employment status of graduates already holding jobs has been the subject of television news, popular periodicals, and professional journals such as the Chronicle of Higher Education. Although an upturn in the economy is opening new job opportunities, like other college graduates, the Roger Williams College graduate competes to find work closely related to their undergraduate major.

Not until 1976 was a follow-up study attempted to solicit the opinions and views of graduates regarding their undergraduate study in business administration. This major study was followed by a informal study of more recently graduated classes.

Need for the Study

A study of how graduates evaluate core components of the program in Business Administration continues to be of significant value to the College. The results identify the core courses which graduates feel need the most improvement in teaching effectiveness, those which were most satisfactory, and those which were most meaningful and relevant. Initially it was anticipated that certain courses would be identified that, in the opinion of graduates, had a low priority for change, as well as those which might be eliminated from the core program. Evaluations by graduates are needed to serve as one input to the development of recommendations for course changes that should make graduates more competitive in the job market.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this investigation was to identify among the twelve core curriculum courses in business administration at Roger Williams College those from which graduates received the greatest satisfaction, those courses graduates thought were taught most effectively, and those which graduates thought were most meaningful and relevant to their present work.

Several major questions were posed. They are as follows:

1. Did graduates majoring in each of the four major areas have the same degree of satisfaction with core courses?

2. Did graduates majoring in each of the four major areas evaluate teaching effectiveness in core courses in the same way?

3. Did graduates majoring in each of the four major areas feel that the core courses have had the same degree of relevance and meaningfulness to their present work?

Scope of the Study

The population studied included approximately 173 graduates in the classes of 1980 and 1981 inclusive who graduated with a baccalaureate or associate degree from any one of the business administration programs at Roger Williams College. More recent classes were excluded in the study because the investigator found that many are still unsettled in their present work. Also excluded in the study were those graduates for whom a current mailing address was not available.

Although results of the previous study have provided motivation and a basis for further defining of goals and objectives for the program and for course improvements, such definitions and specific improvements to be implemented are beyond the scope of this study.

Statement of the Hypotheses

Specific hypotheses tested were as follows:

Hypothesis 1. There were no statistically significant differences in course satisfaction for each course as perceived by graduates when compared by major and by the comparison of data from the graduates of the years 1980 and 1981.

Hypothesis 2. There were no statistically significant differences in teaching effectiveness for each course as perceived by graduates when compared by major and by the comparison of data from the graduates of the years 1980 and 1981.

Hypothesis 3. There were no statistically significant differences in the meaningfulness and relevance of each course as perceived by graduates when compared by major and by the comparison of data from the graduates of the years 1980 and 1981.

Research Methods and Procedures

The first step was to review the survey instrument prepared, tested, and found to be appropriate in 1976 and subsequent follow-up studies. Recent studies have required raising the upper level of current salaries, reflecting the increasing incidence with which college graduates are receiving higher salaries. A question related to professional examinations, such as certified public accountant, broker, and certified management accountant, was added to the general information section.

A listing of alumni with valid mailing addresses was received from the College Computer Center and the Alumni Office. A sample of 116 of the available names was used to mail opinionnaires. Fifteen (15) of 116

TABLE I

NUMBER OF GRADUATES BY MAJOR AND YEAR

Class	Bus Adm	Management	Accounting	Marketing	Total
1980	23	8	14	23	68
1981	38	19	21	27	105
Totals	61	27	35	50	173
Sample Number	49	14	15	38	116

pieces were returned as not deliverable. The total number of graduates selected are shown by year and number in Table I. A return of return of one-third of the sample had been anticipated by the investigator, or 40 opinionnaires. Fifty-nine were received. It is apparent that the mobility of graduates continues to result in mailing addresses that are often not current. Opinionnaires received were checked by hand for completeness, then transferred to the Data General MV10000 Computer and analyzed by a statistical analysis package program.

Data on characteristics of the respondents were totaled and reported as averages by class and major. Ratings of core courses were converted to weighted averages, and interpreted by the writer for each of the twelve core courses individually into indices on priority for change. A mean weighted average was also calculated and reported. Responses to the questions in the survey instrument with regard to each core course were tabulated as follows:

A numerical value was assigned to each response column. Column 1 was given a value of 1, column 2 a value of 2, column 3 a value of 3, column 4 a value of 4, and column 5 a value of 5.

The value placed upon each course by respondents was interpreted by the writer to be indicative of the need for change. The columns were totaled and the sum divided by the number of question responses to obtain a weighted average. It was expected that some courses would not be rated by the graduate because the courses were not completed at Roger Williams College. By computing an average for the respondents in each major, it could be reported whether, in the opinion of the respondents, there was evidence for recommending change in one or more of the core curriculum courses for each major.

With regard to the graduates' evaluations, data have been interpreted by using the following categories of weighted averages:

High priority for change	Average between 3.5 and 5.0
Moderate priority for change	Average between 2.5 and 3.5
Low priority for change	Average between 1.0 and 2.5

Some graduates volunteered comments which are quoted verbatim in Appendix C. These general comments can be interpreted by the reader as a further indication about the graduates' feeling toward the College.

Limitations of the Study

There is no way to know how the graduates who were not included in the survey or who did not respond to the survey instrument would have responded, or whether if their responses had been received the results would have changed.

The graduates' responses reported herein are perceptions and opinions about the core courses in the Business Administration program. It is important to keep in mind that opinions and perceptions of a statistical random sample of only business majors may not be representative of graduates from other academic divisions of the College or other graduated classes. The wide span of opinions and perceptions reported in themselves do not constitute an evaluation of the faculty, but rather they are indications of what the graduates have found useful in their careers, their ways of life, or their personal attainments, and how they now think about their previous experience.

The results of the study are reported in Chapter III. Responses to the eight background questions regarding major field of study, age, job satisfaction, employment, salaries, and professional credential examinations attempted and/or passed are presented in tables and text.

Conclusions and recommendations are reported in Chapter IV. Because the study was not intended to be an evaluation of the faculty, the reader is reminded that the study reports only opinions of the graduates.

CHAPTER II

ABBREVIATED REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Use and Nature of Follow-up Studies

The frequency of follow-up studies attempted by college and universities varies greatly, often because the amount of information to be obtained is dependent upon budget, manpower, and time available. Continuing follow-up has great value to any college. Although surveys of graduates are often initiated by the college alumni offices for the purpose of publishing directories and updating alumni records, follow-up studies of graduates to determine their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of curricula are not as frequently undertaken. At a time when educational institutions must look seriously at their enrollments and operating costs, continuing a strong program of studies is a decided advantage in attracting students.

There are three major purposes for using data from follow-up studies designed for the evaluation of curriculum instruction or personnel procedures. They can be described as follows: (1) to discover facts about the present status of former students, (2) to related these facts to other information known to be true of these individuals when they were in school, and (3) to draw inferences from the relationships found that appear to be significant for the purposes of the study. [1]

Walsh found that determining patterns and trends of career choices was helpful in counseling students. He investigated the existence or non-existence of patterns and trends of career choice persistence at Louisiana State University College of Education. [2] follow-up through employers can be difficult because employers respect the confidentiality of an employee's record, and little information of consequence is made available to the college after the first several years of employment. [3]

The use of personal interviews of graduates would add depth to the anticipated response, but they can be expensive and time consuming. Konrad [4] suggested determining where the evaluation fits into the whole program of study. He was concerned about who would use the findings. In essence, data that are generated from a follow-up study should be

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[1]C. G. Wrenn, "A Critique of Methods Used in Follow-up Studies of Students," Harvard Educational Review, X (May, 1940), 357-358.

[2]Daniel Carroll Walsh, "Persistence of Career Choice Among Graduates of the College of Education, Louisiana State University," (abstract from unpublished Doctoral thesis, 1985), Dissertation Abstracts International, February, 1975, p. 5043-A.

[3]Margaret J. Hilton, "The Employment Status of Men and Women Baccalaureate Graduates from the College of Business Administration at University of Tennessee from 1969 to 1973," (unpublished Doctoral thesis, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1974), p. 15.

[4]Abram G. Konrad, "...And Rode Off Madly in All Directions," (University of Alberta, Canada, 1975), p. 2.

utilized as soon as they are available and then stored in a management information system until further analysis can be undertaken.

Selected Follow-up Studies in Business Fields

Kearney [5] compared career advancement in business among selected liberal arts and sciences graduates and business administration more English composition, economics, and mathematics in the curricula. [6]

Houghton [7] studied the strengths and weaknesses of the business program at Southern Oregon College and found the strongest aspects of the business program were good professors, small classes, accounting courses, and good student/professor relationships. The weakest aspects, in the opinion of the graduates, were that the courses were too theoretical, the management courses were poor, and the curriculum was poor. [8] These bibliographical references are cited, in part, as those that have assisted the investigator most since a similar study was undertaken in the Spring, 1976. The reader may be aware of others.

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[5]William John Kearney, "A Comparison of the Level of Career Advancement in Business Between Selected Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduates and Business Administration Graduates," (abstract from unpublished Doctoral thesis, Michigan State University, 1965), Dissertation Abstracts International, Vol. 26, 1965-66, p. 766.

[6]Alton V. Finch, "A Survey of the 1951-1960 Graduates of Eleven Colleges and Universities in North Carolina With Emphasis Upon the Graduates of East Carolina College, to Determine Some of the Significant Relationships Between Undergraduate Collegiate Business Education and Business Careers," (unpublished Doctoral thesis, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, 1966), Vol. 1, Research Study No.1, from the Abstract.

[7]Edward Houghton, "A Follow-up Study of the Business Graduates of Southern Oregon College, 1964-1969," (unpublished Doctoral thesis, Southern Oregon College, Ashland, Oregon, 1971), p. 49.

[8]Ibid., p. 51.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter are presented the findings of the study based upon 59 responses, or 58 per cent of a net total of 101 opinionnaires with valid addresses. Seven opinionnaires to the Class of 1980 were not deliverable and 8 to the Class of 1981. A distribution of responses is shown in Table II.

TABLE II

SIZE OF SAMPLE AND RESPONSE

BY MAJOR AND YEAR OF GRADUATION

	GBA		MGT		ACCT		MKT		TOTALS			
YEAR	Sent	Retn	Sent	Retn	Sent	Retn	Sent	Retn	Sent	Retn	Net	Total
1980	23	8	6	2	9	6	21	15	59	7	52	31
1981	26	6	8	9	6	5	17	8	57	8	49	28
TOTALS	49	14	14	11	15	11	38	23	116	15	101	59

Characteristics of Respondents

Although each opinionnaire was coded for the graduation year, major and respondent number, each respondent was asked to validate the information, and no discrepancies were found.

Age, Major and Class

The distribution of responses by age range indicated that none of the respondents was between 31 and 34 years of age. Graduates between 20-25 years [11] made up 19 per cent of the responses, 71 per cent [42] were between 26-30, and graduates over 35 [6] made up 10 per cent of the responses. The mean for age was 26.1 years, the median 24.7 years.

Business Administration majors made up 24 per cent of the respondents, Management majors 19 per cent, Accounting majors 19 per cent, and Marketing majors 39 per cent.

The graduates of 1980 represent 53 per cent of the responses in the sample, and graduates in 1981 represent 47 per cent.

Employment of Graduates

The larger number of respondents were Marketing majors. Ten of 23 respondents listed "Other" as to their company affiliation. Data in Table III indicate the categories of employment by number and undergraduate major for each year of graduation.

TABLE III

KIND OF COMPANY OR EMPLOYMENT

MAJOR AND YEAR

Kind of	GBA		MGT		ACCT		MKT		
Employment	1980	1981	1980	1981	1980	1981	1980	1981	Number
Accounting	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Finance	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	2	9
Manufacturing	1	0	2	1	0	0	2	1	7
Retailing	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	3	8
*Other	6	5	0	5	5	3	8	2	34
Sub-Totals	8	6	2	9	6	5	15	8	
Totals	14		11		11		23		59

*Other includes: (GBA 1980) Hotel/Casino, Real Estate Sales, Hospital (GBA 1981) Utility, Hi-tech industry; (MGT 1981) Auto and Truck Repair, Government, Ceramic Tile Contractor, Wholesale Distributor; (ACCT 1980) Private Club, Construction, Plumbing Wholesaler; (ACCT 1981) Self-employed, City Government (2); (MKT 1980) Import Marketing Group, Pharmaceuticals, Restaurant, State Administrative Services, Hi-tech Electronics, Restaurant Owner; (MKT 1981) Wholesale Operations, Industrial Supply House.

Relationship of Major and Present Job

Table IV illustrates responses related to graduates' present work and undergraduate major. Forty-two per cent reported they were in work "Closely" related and 46 per cent in work "Somewhat" related to their undergraduate study, a combined total of 89 per cent. Twelve per cent reported being in work "Unrelated" to their major. The reader will see

TABLE IV

RELATION OF JOB TO MAJOR

	1980	1981	Total	PerCent
Closely Related	13	12	25	42%
Somewhat Related	15	13	28	46%
Unrelated	3	3	6	12%
Totals	31	28	59	100%

that the Class of 1980 reported that 28 of 31 or 90 per cent have jobs

that are either Closely or Somewhat related to their undergraduate major. The Class of 1981 reported 25 of 28 or 89 per cent are in work Closely or Somewhat related to their undergraduate major.

Attitude Toward Job

Thirty-seven per cent of the respondents evaluated job satisfaction as "Great". Fifty-one per cent rated their present work as "Like it". Ten per cent responded that their work was "O.K.", and two per cent of the respondents said they "Dislike" their job. The tabulation is illustrated in Table V.

TABLE V

ATTITUDE TOWARD JOB

Class	Great!	Like It	It's O.K.	Dislike	Hate It	Total	Per Cent
1980	13	16	1	1	0	31	42%
1981	9	14	5	0	0	28	58%
	22	30	6	1	0	59	100%
Per Cent	37%	51%	10%	2%	0%	100%	

Salaries Earned

In Table VI the beginning salary ranges are reported by year and by major. Respondents were asked to indicate the salary category into which their current annual earned income before taxes would fall. This was for the purpose of comparing beginning salary levels with current salary levels. One respondent declined to provide either a beginning or current salary. The mean beginning salary was $12,809 and the median beginning salary was $12,185.

The larger number of respondents, 19 of 58, reported beginning salaries in the $11,000 to $13,999 range. Two reported beginning at under $8000, ten from $8,000 to $10,999, eleven from $14,000 to $16,999, ten from $17,000 to $19,999, and six reported a beginning salary over $20,000.

Current salaries are reported in Section B of Table VI. One respondent still reported an annual salary under $8,000. None reported a salary level of $8,000 to $10,999. Five reported salaries from $11,000 to $13,999; eight are earning from $14,000 to $16,999, four from $17,000 to $19,999, twelve from $20,000 to $22,999, eight from $23,000 to $25,999, and twenty reported earning over $26,000. Because the survey instrument had an upper limit of "Over $26,000", it is possible both mean and median might be higher. The mean current salary was $20,414 and the median current salary was $21,251.

TABLE VI

RANGE OF BEGINNING AND CURRENT SALARIES

PART A

BEGINNING SALARIES

Range	GBA	MGT	ACCT	MKT	TOTAL	PerCent
Under $8,000	1	0	0	1	2	3%
$8,000 to $10,999	3	0	2	5	10	17%
$11,000 to $13,999	4	5	3	7	19	33%
$14,000 to $16,999	1	1	5	4	11	19%
$17,000 to $19,999	1	4	1	4	10	17%
Over $20,000	3	1	0	2	6	10%
Totals	13	11	11	23	58	100%

PART B

CURRENT SALARIES

Range	GBA	MGT	ACCT	MKT	TOTAL	PerCent
Under $8,000	1	0	0	0	1	2%
$8,000 to $10,999	0	0	0	0	0	--
$11,000 to $13,999	2	0	0	3	5	9%
$14,000 to $16,999	1	2	2	3	8	14%
$17,000 to $19,999	1	1	1	1	4	7%
$20,000 to $22,999	2	1	2	7	12	21%
$23,000 to $25,999	1	3	0	4	8	14%
Over $26,000	5	4	6	5	20	35%
Totals	9	8	9	20	46	100%

Professional Examinations

A question not asked in previous follow-up studies was asked in the current study. It is related to the attempt(s) and success in passing of professional examinations such as to become a CPA, Broker, or Certified Management Accountant. It was felt by the investigator that this might provide some data useful in measuring the quality of the business programs in preparing graduates for these examinations.

Five of the respondents who were Accounting majors reported that they had attempted the Certified Public Accountant examination. Four Marketing majors and two Business Administration majors had attempted and passed the examination for a Real Estate Broker's license. One of these also passed the examination to be an Accredited Assessor. Other examinations successfully passed and reported were a Business

Administration major who is an accredited Record Technician, another who has passed the Insurance Institute of America Property and Liability examination, and a Marketing major who is now a Stockbroker.

Grade Point Average At Graduation

The overall mean grade point average at graduation among respondents was 2.85 and the median was 2.70. This falls in the C+ range of grades. Grouping by half-grade increments, the tabulation among respondents shows:

2.00 through 2.49	C	17	29%
2.50 through 2.99	C+	21	36%
3.00 through 3.49	B	11	19%
3.50 through 4.00	B+/A	10	17%

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS RELATED TO OVERALL COURSE SATISFACTION

Table VII illustrates the responses to this question. A weighted average was computed from the ratings provided by the respondents for each course. Courses rated as having a Low priority for change were rated between 1.0 and 2.5, those with a Moderate priority for change were rated between 2.5 and 3.5 and those with a recommended High priority for change were rated 3.5 to 4.0.

TABLE VII

OVERALL COURSE SATISFACTION

Course	GREAT	LIKED	O.K.	DISLIKED	HATED	TOTAL	Mean WgtAv
Fund. Accounting	6	18	20	4	1	49	2.51
Business Law	18	29	4	2	0	53	1.81
Bus. Mathematics	5	18	15	8	2	48	2.67
Data Processing	2	20	19	7	3	51	2.78
Prin Economics	7	20	14	9	2	52	2.60
Govt & Business	7	24	13	4	2	50	2.40
Insurance	21	18	9	0	0	48	1.75
Investments	32	17	3	0	0	52	1.44
Prin Management	12	20	18	1	1	52	2.21
Prin Marketing	19	20	14	1	0	54	1.94
Money & Banking	16	24	9	3	0	52	1.98
Statistics	3	13	8	12	10	46	3.28
Totals	148	241	146	51	21	607	2.27

The three courses that rated as having the lowest priority for change were Investments (1.44), Insurance (1.75), and Business Law (1.81). Others with a Low priority for change were Principles of Marketing (1.94), Money and Banking (1.98), Principles of Management (2.21), Government and Business (2.40).

Those courses with a Moderate priority for change were Fundamental Accounting (2.51), Principles of Economics (2.60), Business Mathematics (2.67), Data Processing (2.78) and Statistics (3.28).

No courses were rated as having a High priority for change as related to Course Satisfaction.

The overall weighted average for Course Satisfaction was 2.27, in the Low priority for change range.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS RELATED TO OVERALL TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

As illustrated in Table VIII the courses that graduates rated as having the highest teaching effectiveness were Investments (1.55), Insurance (1.60), and Business Law (1.92). Their ratings implied a Low priority for change.

TABLE VIII

OVERALL TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

Course	GREAT	LIKED	O.K.	DISLIKED	HATED	TOTAL	Mean WgtAv
Fund. Accounting	7	22	13	6	0	48	2.38
Business Law	18	22	10	2	0	52	1.92
Bus. Mathematics	5	16	21	5	1	48	2.60
Data Processing	3	15	20	7	3	48	2.83
Prin. Economics	11	16	17	7	1	52	2.44
Govt & Business	9	11	18	8	3	49	2.69
Insurance	25	18	4	1	0	48	1.60
Investments	30	15	7	0	0	52	1.55
Prin. Management	7	21	16	6	2	52	2.52
Prin. Marketing	19	14	15	6	0	54	2.15
Money & Banking	13	20	11	5	1	50	2.22
Statistics	3	15	14	10	3	45	2.89
TOTALS	150	205	166	63	14	598	2.31

Other courses receiving a mean weighted average in the 1.0 to 2.5 range were Principles of Marketing (2.15), Money and Banking (2.22), Fundamental Accounting (2.38), and Principles of Economics (2.44).

Courses falling into the category of Moderate priority for change, with mean weighted averages of 2.5 to 3.5, were Principles of Management (2.52), Business Mathematics (2.60), Government and Business (2.69), Data Processing (2.83), and Statistics (2.89).

No courses were rated as in the High priority for change category.

The overall mean weighted average for courses rated as to Teaching Effectiveness was 2.31, indicating a Low priority for change.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS RELATED TO MEANINGFULNESS AND RELEVANCE OF COURSES

The reader will see in Table IX that two courses were ranked for Meaningfulness and Relevance in the Low category, Principles of Management (2.34) and Investments (2.49). These were the only courses that in the category of Low priority for change on a mean weighted average of from 1.0 to 2.5. All of the other courses were ranked as being in the Moderate category as to Meaningfulness and Relevance.

Business Law (2.54), Principles of Marketing (2.61), Business Law (2.81), Money and Banking (2.90), Insurance (3.00), Business Mathematics (3.09), Principles of Economics (3.13), Data Processing (3.22), Government and Business (3.35) and Statistics (3.44) each were rated in this Moderate priority category.

TABLE IX

OVERALL MEANINGFULNESS AND RELEVANCE

Course	GREAT VALUE	MUCH VALUE	SOME VALUE	LIMITED VALUE	NO VALUE	Total	Mean WgtAv
Fund. Accounting	16	9	11	10	4	50	2.54
Business Law	12	7	16	13	4	52	2.81
Bus. Mathematics	4	11	13	15	4	47	3.09
Data Processing	5	7	17	14	7	50	3.22
Prin. Economics	6	8	19	9	9	51	3.13
Govt & Business	5	7	15	13	11	51	3.35
Insurance	8	9	12	13	6	48	3.00
Investments	16	12	10	8	5	51	2.49
Prin. Management	14	18	12	7	2	53	2.34
Prin. Marketing	11	18	12	7	6	54	2.61
Money & Banking	11	8	13	13	6	51	2.90
Statistics	4	7	12	9	13	45	3.44
TOTALS	112	121	162	131	77	603	2.90

The overall mean weighted average for the core courses when rated as Meaningful and Relevant was 2.90, an indication of a Moderate priority for change.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In this section is presented a summary of the study findings.

1. The mean for age of graduates responding to the study was 26.1 years and the median was 24.7 years. The largest number of respondents majored in Marketing.

2. Marketing majors had the greatest variety of company affiliations and employment fields. Forty-two per cent of the respondents are employed in work "Closely" related to their major and 46 per cent are in work "Somewhat" related. Twelve per cent are in "Unrelated" work. None reported "Unemployed". Thirty-seven per cent reported their job was "Great", 51 per cent "Like it", 10 per cent reported "It's O.K.", and 2 per cent "Dislike" their job.

3. The mean beginning salary of all respondents was $12,809 and the median beginning salary was $12,185. The mean current salary is $20,414 and the median current salary is $21,251.

4. A summary of respondents' evaluations of core courses as to satisfaction, teaching effectiveness, and meaningfulness and relevance to their present work interpreted into priority for change is presented in Table X.

5. On Course Satisfaction, Teaching Effectiveness, and Meaningfulness and Relevance, none of the weighted average suggested a High Priority for change in the Course, but the reader must be aware that these are the perceptions of graduates and not a faculty evaluation.

Conclusions

From the information analyzed the investigator concluded that:

1. Because 88 per cent of the study group "Liked" their present jobs that they have found themselves in positions that were professionally satisfying to them as a result of completing their degree at Roger Williams College. Their salaries, both beginning and current, appear to be appropriate to graduates of a business administration program at the time of graduation and currently.

2. That no one reported being unemployed contrasted sharply with the reported percentage of unemployment in their known

TABLE X

SUMMARY OF CORE COURSE EVALUATIONS BY PRIORITY FOR CHANGE

Course	Satisfaction	Effectiveness	Meaningfulness and Relevance
Fundamental Accounting	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Business Law	Low	Low	Moderate
Business Mathematics	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Data Processing	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Principles of Economics	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Government and Business	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Insurance	Low	Low	Moderate
Investments	Low	Low	Low
Principles of Management	Low	Moderate	Low
Principles of Marketing	Low	Low	Moderate
Money and Banking	Low	Low	Moderate
Statistics	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Overall Priority	Low	Low	Moderate

areas of residence and employment. This fact would seem to speak well for the business administration program in preparing Roger Williams College graduates to compete successfully for a job, and it was an indication that graduates were as well prepared as those from other colleges for work.

3. The small numbers of students who attempt professional examinations might be indicative of their satisfaction with their present level of responsibility, and that attempting an examination for a professional credential may not an immediate goal. However, it may also be that there is a reluctance to attempt such examinations for other reasons not identified.

Recommendations and Implications

Recommendations may be offered and implications considered in light of those who might use this study and those who would use the study, bearing in mind that a number of people and committees, as well as budget and time considerations would have to be weighed.

The reader is again reminded that these statistics reflect only the perception of graduates regarding core courses in business. Such data is a part of any curriculum evaluation, but other elements must certainly be considered in making any changes in the core curriculum in business.

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APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER FROM PRESIDENT OF
ROGER WILLIAMS COLLEGE

COVER LETTER FROM INVESTIGATOR USED AS
SECOND MAILING TO SAMPLE

Roger Williams College

Bristol, Rhode Island 02809

March 1, 1985

Dear Business Graduate:

We are continuing a study of our former students to gather information about their perception of the business administration core curriculum courses. This information can come best from you, who have left your studies and begun your professional work.

The purpose of the study is to determine the characteristics of our business administration program that have most affected the professional lives of our graduates. It is most important that the effectiveness, and the relevance of the subject matter to your present work, be given our continuing attention.

Your opinion would be valuable to us.

Will you help by putting a check-marked answer to the several questions and returning this opinionnaire just as promptly as possible? The responses are anonymous.

The opinionnaire was prepared by Dr. Kenneth W. Cedergren, Assistant to the Dean of the College, and has been used successfully since 1976.

We believe your responses will be significant to us.

An early and prompt reply, possibly within a week after your receive this request, will be appreciated. A postage-paid reply envelope is included for your convenience in returning your opinionnaire.

I send our warm greetings to you from all of us at the College.

Sincerely yours,

William H. Rizzini
President

Enclosures

Roger Williams College

Bristol, Rhode Island 02809
(401)
NEW 253-1040

April 3, 1985

To: Selected Business Graduates and Majors:

Just about a month ago we sent an invitation to you to offer some perceptions of the business administration core curriculum courses you completed at Roger Williams College.

Perhaps because of personal or professional activities you have not had an opportunity to respond. The purpose of the study is to determine the characteristics of our business administration program that have most affected the professional lives of our graduates. It is important that the effectiveness, and the relevance of the subject matter to your present work, be given our attention.

Please consider returning this opinionnaire just as promptly as possible. Your response will be anonymous, and your opinions will be valuable to us.

Will you help by putting a check-marked answer to the several questions and returning the opinionnaire to us in the envelope provided?

A postage-paid reply envelope is included for your convenience in returning your response.

If you have an address change or want to pass along some personal news, add a note on a separate sheet of paper and I shall pass it along. There are always interesting and exciting happenings at the College and we want to stay in touch with you.

President Rizzini joins me in sending Easter and Passover greetings and good wishes to you and yours.

Cordially,

Kenneth W. Cedergren

Kenneth W. Cedergren, Ed.D.
Assistant to the Dean of the College

Enclosures

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Class Year Code _____

CONFIDENTIAL: Responses to be used for statistical purposes only.

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GRADUATE OPINIONNAIRE FOR BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

DIRECTIONS: Please provide the following information by writing the number of your answer in the blank in front of the question.

PART I - GENERAL INFORMATION

_____ 1. In what field did you major? (Select one)

1. Gen'l Bus. Adm. 2. Management 3. Accounting 4. Marketing

_____ 2. What was your age on your most recent birthday? (Select one)

1. 20 - 25 2. 26 - 30 3. 31 - 35 4. Over 35

_____ 3. With what kind of company or firm are you now employed? (Select one)

1. Accounting
2. Finance (Banking)
3. Manufacturing
4. Retailing
5. Education
6. Unemployed
7. Other (Be specific) _____

_____ 4. What is the relation of your business major to your present work? (Select one)

1. Closely related
2. Somewhat related
3. Unrelated
4. Unemployed, but searching for a related position

_____ 5. How do you feel about the type of work you do in your present employment? (Select one)

1. It's great!
2. Like it
3. As jobs go, it's o.k.
4. Dislike it
5. Hate it

_____ 6. What was your annual starting salary in your first, permanent, full-time job after graduating from Roger Williams College? (Select one)

1. Under $8,000
2. $8,000 - $10,999
3. $11,000 - $13,999
4. $14,000 - $16,999
5. $17,000 - $19,999
6. over $20,000

_____ 7. What is your approximate current annual earned income before taxes? (Select one)

1. Under $8,000
2. $8,000 - $10,999
3. $11,000 - $13,999
4. $14,000 - $16,999
5. $17,000 - $19,999
6. $20,000 - $22,999
7. $23,000 - $25,999
8. over $26,000

_____ 8. Which of the following professional credential examinations have you attempted or passed?

1. C.P.A. Attempted ____ Passed ____
2. Realtor or Broker Attempted ____ Passed ____
3. Certified Management Accountant Attempted ____ Passed ____
4. Other (Be specific)_____

PART II - OPINIONS ABOUT CORE COURSES

DIRECTIONS: Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible. Place a check mark (✓) opposite each course in the appropriate column to express your opinion. Mark only the courses you completed at Roger Williams College. Leave blank any courses taken elsewhere.

1. Please indicate for each core course taken at Roger Williams College your satisfaction with the course. Did you perceive the course as an interesting and effective learning experience?

Course Satisfaction:	1) It was Great!	2) Liked It	3) It was "O.K."	4) Disliked It	5) Hated It
01. Fundamental Accounting					
02. Business Law					
03. Business Mathematics					
04. Data Processing					
05. Principles of Economics					
06. Government and Business					
07. Insurance					
08. Investments					
09. Principles of Management					
10. Principles of Marketing					
11. Money and Banking					
12. Statistics					

2. Please indicate, in your opinion, the effectiveness of teaching related to each core course taken at Roger Williams College. Was the material presented appropriate to the course and did it help you to better understand the subject?

Teaching Effectiveness:	1) It was Great!	2) Above Average	3) It was "O.K."	4) Fair	5) Poor
01. Fundamental Accounting					
02. Business Law					
03. Business Mathematics					
04. Data Processing					
05. Principles of Economics					
06. Government and Business					
07. Insurance					
08. Investments					
09. Principles of Management					
10. Principles of Marketing					
11. Money and Banking					
12. Statistics					

(Please turn the page for an additional question. Thank you.)

3. Please indicate the meaningfulness and relevance of the core courses taken at Roger Williams College in business administration to your present work. Is the course related and useful?

Meaningfulness and Relevance:	1) Great Value	2) Much Value	3) Sometimes of Value	4) Limited Value	5) No Value
01. Fundamental Accounting					
02. Business Law					
03. Business Mathematics					
04. Data Processing					
05. Principles of Economics					
06. Government and Business					
07. Insurance					
08. Investments					
09. Principles of Management					
10. Principles of Marketing					
11. Money and Banking					
12. Statistics					

4. You may, if you wish, use the space below to add any comments you wish about the Business Administration program you completed.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR OPINIONNAIRE IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX C

COMMENTS FROM STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

APPENDIX C

COMMENTS FROM STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Words in parenthesis ( ) are those of the investigator to preserve the confidentiality of the respondent.

General Business Administration

"I am an outside sales rep. I feel there should be more courses geared to selling techniques. Since I have graduated I have taken (the) Dale Carnegie Course which has been very beneficial to me." (1980)

"For a student who has had 4 years of math in high school Business Math is nothing but a review class. You might take this into consideration when advising students and suggest that those with a strong math background try to test out of this core requirement." (1981)

"Received a B.S. at University of (Y). Teaching effectiveness at RWC was best. Courses in which the textbooks were used nationally compared to friends at (other colleges) were mainstream business education. Courses which didn't stress the textbook were 'unforgettable.'" (1980)

"Many of my instructors have taught me about life and the values and ideals which are close to me now. From my dorm experiences and my informal relationships with students, instructors, faculty and people in the nearby communities, I have learned to live a full life and profit from my past. I know that's not the answer you expected from someone who paid thousands of dollars to take a list of classes, but RWC is not just a school, it's an experience which gave me a whole new lease on life, a reason for living. I think about RWC everyday and I love those thoughts, and the friends I've known." (1980)

"Having graduated 4-5 years ago, I'm sure much has changed at RWC. However, when I was there, I felt that the marketing program lacked somewhat in scope and content. Also, management courses, particularly those taught by Mr. (X) were fantastic and I strongly believed that the management and business policy curriculum could have been greatly expanded for those students seeking Business Adm. or Management degrees. In fact, I saw no distinction between those degrees. Also, the Real Estate, Investment, and Insurance courses offered good practical knowledge, especially for personal use, but I would have liked to get more details. Business policy, advanced management courses need to be offered.

Just a passing comment on computers. From my experiences, I have found that a solid knowledge of what computers are and can do is very important in today's business environment. However, unless the student plans on being a programmer...his or her time would be better spent in the above mentioned courses. A manager uses the output from computers, but rarely has to interface directly with them. I do use a personal

computer daily, but use purchased software such as LOTUS, DATAEASE, MULTIMATE, etc., which can be easily self-taught. Unless (you) have already done so, RWC should have strong course work on these personal computers." (1980)

"Didn't teach enough about computers to be useful in a business management position. Basic computer course was not as helpful as it seemed to be when I took the course." (1981)

Management

"The programs at RWC are the primary reason for my success in the field I'm currently in (Personnel Management). I was recently promoted to Deputy Chief of Staffing and Employee Relations for the region of N.E. an agency within the Department of Defense." (1980)

"Quantitative methods and accounting skills should be emphasized in the business program. Also, more emphasis should be placed on financial analytical skills, as they are almost universally required in business." (1981)

"The curriculum of the program is fine, unfortunately the teaching staff had a lot to do with the students' ability and motivation to learn." (1980)

"I feel it was my all round education and extra activities at RWC that has got me to the position I am at now, being an R.A., sports, social activities, etc." (1981)

Accounting

"I thoroughly enjoyed my education at RWC. I may not be using my accounting now, but I am glad that it was my major. I am still an accountant at heart (so I'm told at work may times). The courses I took were good more than not. some of the instructors could have been more challenging. I have a tendency to learn more with a strict teacher. "A's" should be worked hard for." (1981)

Marketing

"I really enjoyed the business courses offered. Need more business-related math problems with profit and losses, just for an example." (1980)

"I was in (the) Open Division and took most of my courses either off-campus or at another school. Also, I already had an Associate degree, so most of the core courses were (completed) there." (1980)

"I felt that I left Business Administration understanding how the business world works and how everything was tied together." (1980)

"When attending RWC the Business Department needed a shot of energy, as did I. I have finally gotten the needed shot, I only hope the Business Department did." (1980).

"...more emphasis should be placed on investments, real estate, real estate law...a complete course pertaining to just "Banking", how the system works, and possibly offer a field trip to a Federal or Chase Manhattan Bank, etc. More on practical courses used in the "real world" rather than so much theory." (1980)

"I viewed my experience at RWC as one of a maturing process. My real education started when I entered the work force." (1980)

"I am proud to say that I graduated from RWC. I needed the individual/one-on-one attention that was given to me. I've recommended it to all that have asked about the school." (1980)

"I thoroughly enjoyed receiving my undergrad degree at RWC. I feel the teachers are on the whole were/are excellent. Having smaller class sizes was a major benefit. I feel I have received a good education. Unfortunately, most colleges (except perhaps ones with work experience integrated into the curriculum) can offer a true feel of the real working world. If that could be somehow accomplished, you would have an exceptional program!" (1980)

"At the time not enough emphasis was put on data processing. In general, the courses offered should break away from the routine theory and provide more reality to the business world. Possibly increase the requirements of co-op jobs and experiences. Thank you for the time to express my views." (1981)

"In my opinion the program at RWC was well-rounded and fits my profession quite well." (1981)

"I enjoyed the Marketing program at Roger Williams. However, I thought Mr. (X) was a very ineffective department head and instructor. I say this with having no personal grievances about him. We got along very well. He seemed to put more time into his own personal business than his classes and programs." (1981)